DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 212 897 CE 031 523

AUTHOR Borthwick, Thomas H.
TITLE Some of the Significant Factors That Affect Participation of the Older Person in Lifelong Learning Programs. A Report Presented to the Faculty of the School of Education, San Diego State University.
PUB DATE Jul 81
NOTE 54p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; *Adult Programs; *Lifelong Learning; Literature Reviews; *Older Adults; Participant Characteristics; *Participation

ABSTRACT

The literature was studied to investigate some of the significant factors that affect participation of the non-institutionalized older person in lifelong learning programs. Sources were fairly recent (1975-80) abstracts, journals, textbooks, ERIC documents, and SCAN (The Social Gerontology Resource Center). The age-span under consideration was age 65 and over. Focuses of the literature review were economic and geographic background; educational gerontology; the learning environment; physical, physiological, and psychological characteristics; and sociological and cultural profiles. Reasons for low level participation of the older person were cost, inconvenience, transportation problems, attitudes towared self and educational institutions, and anxiety over negative attitudes of faculty and other students. It was recommended that tasks should be eliminated or minimized that relate to functions that decline with age, the university should involve older persons in education, and a theory of learning needs to be developed from the older learner's perspective. (In addition to a 10-page bibliography, statistics are appended that relate to participation in adult education, 1969-75.) (YLB)

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SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS THAT AFFECT PARTICIPATION OF THE OLDER PERSON IN LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMS

A Report

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

San Diego State University

by

Thomas H. Borthwick

July 1981

CE031523

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The world's people have come to realize that education can be a life-course experience and to the older person his capacity for continuing personal development can be one of his greatest resources. In Europe as well as America there is a surge of new learning programs throughout the educational complex. As a result, courses are now offered in parks, museums, senior housing complexes, libraries, neighborhood and service organization facilities, union halls, churches and, of course community colleges and university extension departments.

Given these opportunities suited to the learning styles of later life, almost every older citizen can learn what he needs and wants to know.

Lifelong learning has become a necessity for anyone who must cope with accelerating change. Therefore, we need to examine the barriers that prevent the older person from becoming the older learner.

There is not much literature available which investigates specific learner characteristics and how

these affect learning outcomes. There is even less information which focusses on how characteristics change over time in response to developmental change in the learner or the environment.

The Problem

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to investigate some of the significant factors that affect participation of the non-institutionalized older person in lifelong learning programs.

A major difficulty in conceptualizing learning characteristics of the latescence group is that the concepts have, in many cases, become stereotyped. There is evidence to contradict these labels, but the pedagogue permits a disservice to the older learner by denying or discounting this research.

Importance of the Study

Today's older person has many options for continuing or completing his education through traditional or non-traditional institutions, credited or non-credited courses or even structured or non-structured methods. These educational opportunities will enable the older person to improve communications;

reduce conflict, identify issues of concern, promote learning and actively participate in the planning of his continuing education.

Life-span learning is not only in the public interest, but academic achievement will improve self-concept. It is the relationship between this education and those dimensions of his experience that give value, meaning, and purpose to life. It is important to the democratic process, as well as the individual that learning for personal adjustment as well as productive living continue throughout life.

The present group of older persons have a low rate of participation in educational activities, yet they would have never survived the great depression and two world wars without some capacity to be constantly learning and re-learning.

Another important consideration is the possible counter effect the older learner can marshal against the present book-burners, and curriculum and liberty restrictors who can only jeopardize the quality of lifelong learning by prohibiting informed discussion and intergenerational meetings in community/public facilities.

Considering the demographic projections for

the older population in the world society and the sweeping benefits learning can bring to this group, our present research efforts are totally inadequate and we are risking the loss of the talents and resourcefulness of a priceless national asset.

Questions to be Explored

Has the traditional educational institution been exclusively oriented toward youth? Do the older learners suffer serious decline in mental abilities?

Are the barriers inflexible that hinder the older person from engaging in continuing education?

Is the present content-curriculum approach in higher education the best way to address the older learner? Why do older persons participate in continuing education? Does the majority of adult learning take place in a school setting? What is the future of the older person on the campus?

It is beyond the scope of this paper and the ability of this writer to address all of these questions in depth, however, we will attempt to single out the significant factors insofar as they apply in our opinion, to the problem statement.

Delimitations of the Study

There is a time and research restraint that must be reckoned with such as the fact that a good deal of the recent (and only) studies are isolated, unpublished, or not indexed in a repository or a clearinghouse.

The demographic characterisitcs for participation in continued learning for this group are well established and for purposes of this study will be limited to the summary and trends in Appendix A. Persons who have obtained higher levels of education participate more frequently in adult education than those with less education.

Participation in adult education by persons fifty-five years of age and over who were not full-time students in high school or college increased 55.2 percent between 1969 and 1975, or at an average annual rate of 7.6 percent. The total population of persons fifty-five years of age and over increased 11.5 percent during the six-year period, or at an average annual rate of 1.8 percent. (See Appendix A.)

Further limitations are the exclusion of the blacks and other races and the institutionalized older person due to little or no research and the small size

of the population.

A 1979 study by Anderson and Darkenwald found a 10 percent variance accounted for all the socio-demographics variables. Therefore this study has not considered race, sex, income, place of residence and former employment as significant variables.

Collateral learning with no long-run value such as hobbies, recreation, studio arts and crafts were not considered.

Definition of Terms

Inasmuch as the older person learns by many means and is particularly adept at non-traditional learning, we must include the definition of the below listed terms.

Experiential and Non-experiential Learning. This is a broad category and includes: Life-course learning, Life-span learning, Lifetime learning, Lifelong learning. Although we are using the terms synonymously, we wish to include two fairly standard definitions:

> Lifelong learning is the process by which individuals continue to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes throughout their lifetime.

And from UNESCO Supreme Legislative Body, the general

conference:

> The term "lifelong education and learning" denotes any overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire educational potential outside the education system; in such a scheme men and women are the agents of their own education.

Age. Older person, older learner and the latescence group all refer to the individual 65 years of age or older.

Andragogy. Andragogy is derived from the Greek words "aver" meaning man and "agogus" meaning leader of, it is not a new word; it was used in Germany as early as 1833 (Malcolm Knowles, January, 1971). So for our purpose Andragogy means the art and science of teaching adults, and pedagogy, the art and science of teaching children.

Gerogogy. Gerogogy is mentioned here only because it is beginning to appear in the literature as a suggested alternate term to Andragogy.

Knowledge explosion. Knowledge explosion is merely our need to know more in an era of information.

Facilitator. We decided to use the term "facilitator" throughout this report to refer to any

person assisting the latescence group to learn or change. Other synonymous terms: teacher, instructor, planner, tutor, advisor, and counselor.

Masculine pronoun. The masculine pronoun was used throughout, not as a sexist comment, but to avoid the cumbersome she/he.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature for this study was found in abstracts, journals, textbooks, ERIC Documents, and SCAN (The Social Gerentology Resource Center). The bulk of the material was fairly recent--1975 to 1980. The age-span was from age fifty-five to age eighty-three. This investigator tried to confine the references to the age sixty-five and over.

In 1975, R. E. Peterson prepared a feasibility study titled, "Meeting California's Educational Needs," and concluded the most immediate problem preventing the older person from participating in any type of education is lack of information on educational resources.

In a recent survey reported by Roger DeCrow in New Learning for Older Adults, Adult Education Association of the USA, 26 percent was the weighted part assigned to the problem of locating an audience.

The older person has physiological, psychological, social, and cultural dimensions that are constantly interacting and these factors plus

individualized differences make for a complex group with great diversity.

Following are some of the important A, B, C's (aids, barriers, and cautions) for learning facilitators working with the older learner.

Economic and Geographical Background

The population variable that will affect the educational participation is the sparse, rural or dense suburban according to Boaz (1978).

Research has demonstrated the importance of proximity and access to educational services, (Cross, 1981). As the proportion of persons over age sixty-five grows, sensitivity to unmet lifelong learning rises and the need for redesigning our educational delivery system becomes apparent. Sources differ in the limiting factors that reduce participation of the older person in learning opportunities for example: Goodrow (1975) lists the three most prevalent as poor vision, home responsibilities, and lack of transportation.

All census data show that a total of 42 million Americans are over age fifty-five and the number is growing. This group as taxpapers have a right to lifelong learning programs from the community college

to the university. Professor Robert Havighurst (1976) in Education Through the Adult Life Span states participation in continuing education by people over sixty will increase.

The Federal government has provided only a fraction of its financial support for learning opportunities for adults over traditional college age, an even smaller portion is allocated for life-span learning for the older person, according to Richardson (DHEW, 1978).

Economic Profile

In the Northeastern area of the United States 10 percent participation factor is correlated, with a 16.6 percent for the West.

In Sweden, Urban Bergsten postulated an integrated relationship between work and leisure. Changing the work pattern to allow for more stimulating and enriching leisure as only part of the leisure pattern, is a highly cultural organized activity.

Mobility often presents problems for older persons, limiting their opportunities for involvement. The cost of gasoline, car maintenance, increasing loss of physical functions, and the decline in sensory acuity not only limit older persons actual ability to

transport themselves from one place to another, but also significantly affect their perception of personal mobility.

Minor obstacles may appear to be major, thereby making short distances to be long and routine directions complex. Mobility has special significance for the older woman. Two-thirds of the older population are women and seven-tenths of all older women are widows. A widow is often left with an automobile that even if she can operate, she cannot maintain it. Her use of the auto, may therefore decline, and mobility may become an increasingly complex obstacle.

Removing geographical barriers calls for decentralizing the colleges existing delivery system to include off-campus sites in areas with high concentrations of older persons. Removing these barriers to participation is an overall, comprehensive strategy for increasing the access of the older person to higher education or lifelong learning.

Most older person's incomes are fixed, but inflation is not. As the cost of living rises, greater proportions of their incomes must be spent on the basic necessities of food, shelter, and clothing. This results in strict limitations on opportunities for personal growth and socializing which generally

isolates the older person.

Removing the economic barrier calls for establishing a tuition policy that provides for a complete, partial, or sliding-scale reduction of tuition for older learners.

Cost barriers were emphasized with Proposition 13, in California. Many of the courses that had a high interest for the older learner were dropped from the curriculum, 20 percent of the non-credit courses were cancelled, and 10 percent of the courses were shifted to a fee basis which may have made these courses prohibitive costwise to the older learner.

Educational Gerentology

In Educational Interests of the Elderly, Wasserman (1976) found the overall interest in various types of college courses among the elderly is quite low and age is strongly related to course interest. Results suggest policy makers should be cautious in funding educational programs for the older person and focus on courses for individuals under 70 years of age.

Agruso (1978) describes and explains the nature of the learning process in the older learner, with

emphasis on persons over age sixty-five. He focuses on specific problem areas, such as, real age related differences, and real significance of differences in learning potential, performance variables, and memory functions.

The Intergenerational Education Program in some Massachusetts schools creates opportunities for youth and elders to interact with each other. The purpose of the program is to reactivate and utilize the spirit, knowledge, expertise, and individual life experience of the current generation of older Americans. It shows how individuals of different generations are interdependent; how information from the elderly can be recycled effectively to other generations and how our educational system can create more positive images and attitudes about today's elders.

Dr. Mel Holmes (1980) writing in the Adult Education Journal documents a study that indicates beliefs and attitudes about adult education differ significantly for andragogically and pedagogically-orientated educators. A significant correlation exists between interpersonal behaviors and orientations of andragogical educators.

While certain physical handicaps may occur,

older persons can learn, nevertheless, older persons are interested in learning new things and are excited by interacting with younger people in intergenerational college courses. Many programs are being built on the 1965 Higher Education Act and other adult education legislation. The most recent of these, and perhaps the most innovative, is the Elderhostel which offers residential academic programs to persons within a network of over 100 college and university campuses in eighteen states for one week periods. Elderhostel attempts to integrate older persons into the larger society through intergenerational classes.

In "Adult Education," Malcom Knowles (1978) explains the importance of seeing education as a process of continuous learning, both for the benefit of the older person and for the benefit of society, which needs people capable of learning new information throughout their lives. Knowles (1972) continues, in Toward a Model of Lifelong Education to examine some of the criticisms that have been leveled at the educational system by the social analysts. One of the new realities is that education must be a lifelong process in order to avoid "the catastrophe of human obsolescence." Based on the assumption that the purpose of education is the development of competencies

for performing the various roles of human life, one element in a new educational model would be a taxonomy of these roles and their required competencies. Knowles made the original plea for andragogy over pedagogy, however, Knudson (1980) writing in Lifelong Learning says that pedagogy assumes that education of children and adults is essentially the same. Andragogy takes the view that adults and children learn in different ways. In lieu of these polarized concepts, educators need to approach human learning as a matter of degree, not kind, recognizing the similarities as well as the differences between learning adults and learning children. Another author, Jaques Lebel (1978), says that sufficient data exist to suggest the need for a theory of education for the elderly, significantly different from pedagogy or andragogy as traditionally defined, and suggests research in the field of Gerogogy.

Still another viewpoint is expressed by Meyer (1977) in Educational Gerontology in that aging adults are competent, capable learners, and the andragogical process is one very effective way of assuring pre-retirement education using andragogy as a participatory education technique.

Removing the educational barrier involves the

concepts that education must provide lifelong service and opportunity for flexible participation and that educators must account for prior non-academic learning experiences. Services must be adaptable to the special needs and life styles of the older person. These concepts involve three components of education: course content, delivery system and instructional technique.

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) conducted a national survey of adult learning, defining learning as including all "systematically" organized learning activities, but they placed "self-instruction" as a residual category. They found the incidence of self-education very high and therefore stated, "it is probably the most overlooked avenue of activity in the whole field of adult education."

At the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Allan Tough (1971) found that almost three-fourths of learning projects of adults are completely self-directed; about 15 percent involve group learning; 10 percent are one to one learning situations; and 3 percent programmed (teaching machines, television et cetera).

Only 20 percent of all adult learning projects are planned by a professional who is paid or institutionally designated to facilitate learning.

The Learning Environment

It has been suggested by Atan Bin Long, Ph.d. dissertation, University of Wisconsin (1972), in that the "mental block factor: often experienced by nursing home patients is related to the confining physical environment, lack of communications, and restricted social activities.

Creating a good learning atmosphere could compensate for losses in vision and hearing by the older learner.

A hostile environment is well within the province of the facilitator to correct.

Coupled with the environment, of course, are teacher behaviors. Educational research offers little material in this area, the bulk of the knowledge we have, has come from the field of guidance and counselling.

If the older learner is given excessive amounts of information from the environment causing a sensory overload, the learner may process the information in a manner that distorts and deletes by over-simplifing (Katz and Kahn, 1979).

The older learner can profit from instruction and novel experience. Aids in learning, coupled with

teaching strategies, should be included in the design of learning environments. In Guiding the Older Learner," Victor M. Agruso, Jr. (1980) suggests placing emphasis on the maximation of capacity through recognition of individual differences. We might offer a conjecture that subsequent research will show, in the case of the older learner, this 20 percent might even be less.

The fact that adults can learn and do learn throughout life, but only some adults, brings up the question of motivation, a very complex and difficult concept at best, that is further compounded in the case of the older person by a great range of age-related differences and the almost impossible task of obtaining and recording data from this group.

The entire matter might best be approached through teaching and/or facilitating in the affective instead of the cognitive domain. If we look at the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, in the affective domain we find:

> objectives which emphasize a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection. Affective objectives vary from simple attention to selected phenomena, to complex but internally consistent qualities of character and conscience. We found a large number of such objectives in the

> literature expressed as interests, attitudes, appreciations, values, and emotional sets of biases . . . (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, Handbook II; Affective Domain).

There is a possibility that the older learner would be attracted to and more likely to participate in an educational undertaking that was structured in the affective domain.

Howard McClusky (1965) maintains that the older learner requires a special focus and attention:

> First, one is impressed with data showing the great range of individual differences that increase with age. So extreme are the differences that one must be very cautious about the kind of claim he makes for the validity of his generalizations. Second, data from various sources are providing a growing case for a differential psychology of adults. Already it is clear the pattern of abilities increases in difference from adolescence through early adulthood and on into the middle and late years. Third, more research is greatly needed but it must be conducted with concepts and instruments that are most relevant to the unique features of the adult condition. For example, more work needs to be done on appropriate criterion of adult intelligence, on "age fair" tests, and on devices that get beneath the surface of the adult personality. Fourth, there is a serious lack of research dealing with the lower class adult . . . Fifth, the problem of adult psychology is a part of a problem of conservation of human resources. Already the limits of the productive years are moving upwards both in theory and practice.

Physical, Physiological and Psychological Characteristics

Peter Drucker said in The Age of Discontinuity:

> Extended schooling still assumes that one can only learn before one becomes an adult. Continuing education assumes that one learns some things best as an adult. Above all, extended schooling believes that the longer we keep the young away from work and life, the more they will have learned. Continuing education assumes, on the contrary, that the more experience in life and work that people have, the more eager they will be to learn, and the more capable, they will be of learning.

Arlin's (1975) research supports the Piagetian task, for formal development of intellectual operations that purports that some adults never reach the formal operations stages or as Arlin categorizes it, "the fifth cognitive stage." This certainly would be a barrier to participation in learning by the affected group.

Educational development usually stops when individuals do not have the disequalibrating experiences that lead to formulation of higher-stage structures.

Studies on learning in relationship to age have generally not controlled the non-learning factors. Botwinick (1975) classes these studies into six categories: conditioning, verbal learning, rigidity in learning, perceptual and psychomotor learning, practical learning and memory.

Botwinick (1971) emphasizes that what has been

accepted as a deficit of the aged in ability to acquire information over periods of time may be an age deficit in the ability to acquire information in the first place. Dr. Alex Comfort (1976) applied this theory over the board in accounting for many age-related sterotypes such as an "old crock" might have well been a "young crock" in other words many of the traits that are attributed to aging could have been part of the individual all his life.

Likewise learning and memory abilities are closely related processes. Poor learning ability gives little or no information for retention. Poor memory ability gives little or no evidence of learning. In the older person it is difficult to determine whether the problem is acquisition or retention of knowledge.

The undereducated older person is apt to yield passively as Ecklund suggests to "self-fulfilling prophecies . . . such as inability to learn." As a result, undereducation prohibits this potential learner in achieving satisfaction in any of the four categories of need which Howard McClusky, in a background paper on Education for the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, stated.

Understanding the needs and the folkways will

place the learning experience in tune with the learner's style.

My physical handicap limits my mobility.

Sometimes it is difficult to determine whether increased participation is due to more motivation or better health. This also has a direct bearing on learning performance. If groups differ with respect to the relevant non-cognitive factors, then even if they do not differ in learning ability, they will differ in learning ability, they will differ in performance. These non-cognitive factors are loss of speed, health, and motivation. There is a loss of speed of response with the older person, and the more the learned response involves speed, the greater the penalty for the older person.

Personality characteristics and attitudes that affect educational participation stem from the relationship of the learner's self-concept as for a high learner will project directly to his self-concept, the low learner will not relate. Another attitude factor is the effect of early school experiences.

The major physical changes that are common to all older learners are a decline in the speed of response of the central nervous system and a loss of acuity in hearing and vision.

The older learner will readily compensate for these losses, sometimes by mechanical means (eyeglasses, hearing aids) and taking more time (own pace) to learn the material, but even so there is no corresponding loss or decline in the ability to learn or in the power or correctness of the learning response (McClusky, 1970).

Hunt and Sullivan in an extensive review of Lewin's BPE paradigm stated that:

> We believe that the person occupies the central role in any psychological theory and that educational planning should begin with the learner rather than objectives or teaching methods.

Physical age still remains a barrier to educational opportunities for millions of older persons in America. If we were to encourage life-span learning policies by removing the age factor as the prime determinant of education participation.

Traditional youth-oriented concepts of education make it difficult for older persons to relate to the services of higher education. This may explain why needs assessments conducted by colleges may yield data that indicates a low interest in education among the older population. Education is usually perceived as a "life stage" that one enters, passes through,

and exits at some point with little or no thought of returning. Removing the psychological barrier calls for emphasis on eliminating older persons' perception of education as they experienced it in their youth. Programs should use informal group discussions, techniques to allow the older learner to participate not only as a receiver of information but also as a provider of information, sharing meaningful life experiences.

Sociological and Cultural Profiles

Although the exact nature of educational demands that will be placed on the delivery system in the near future, there is no doubt the older segment of our population is growing proportionately to a decrease in number and relative size of the youth cohort.

Another recognized social trend is the increasing number of older persons participating in all forms of educational opportunities.

Community education should embrace all the associated education functions, but, according to New Directions, "The most accessible, most comprehensive community colleges still fall short of enrolling a student body which is fully representative of the communities being served." There is a need for

education in the older years and certain behaviors, which apparently improve with age, are related to the prerequisites for learning according to an article by D. Woodruff (1975), "Research in Adult Learning," in the Gerontologist.

Cultural

For over thirty years Brooklyn College began granting credit for life experiences. More than 100 institutions now provide experiential credit. In the Journal of Higher Education, 66:1, May/June 1975/339 outlines how this practice is accomplished.

Allen Tough in Adult Learning Projects (1971) clearly established that the older person is a self-directed learner. In traditional education the learning activity is structured by the teacher and the institution. To accommodate the older learner this needs to be changed so as learning on the learner's own initiative can take the place instead of being taught.

In his book, The Three Boxes of Life, Richard Bolles (1978) equates three life stages: childhood; adulthood; and older adulthood with the three activity boxes titled: learning; working; and playing.

Although all activities take place at all stages, the box title predominates. The relevance of the boxes' image for the older learner is break out of the box via lifetime learning.

Kurland suggests that post secondary education should "move away from the emphasis on terminal degrees," and toward the concept learning is valuable in and of itself.

"The value of education is perceived strictly in terms of tangible gains, and learning pursuits are not associated with pleasurable life experiences" (Johnstone and Rivera, 1965:263).

Academic advisement is both needed and necessary for the older person planning any learning participation which will provide a new adventure for increased fulfillment, productivity, and self-expression.

According to Kasworm (1978) North America and Europe are being transformed into a society of elders primarily due to improvements in medical technology and the reduction of the birth rate. Traditional life constructs are no longer valid. The futurist must begin to explore new systems which provide a viable synergistic relationship among education, work, and

leisure. Educational leaders are exploring the concepts of lifelong learning and recurrent education. The primary goal is to break up the present age-segregated youth ghetto of education and create multidiversional systems infused with concepts of lifelong learning for all age groupings. Earl Kauffman (1971) presented a paper titled, "School Bells are Ringing for Grandparents," at the Pre-retirement Conference, 6 May 1971, Greensboro, North Carolina, in which the major premise was that morale in retirement is achieved through involvement in intellectual, social, and physical experiences which are meaningful to the person and his social milieu.

To counter this, G. B. March et al. (1977) interviewed 99 subjects aged 62 and over as to why they were not attending free university classes. Results indicated 68 percent were not interested.

"Too Old to Learn" and "You Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks" are only two of many negative remarks we are likely to hear about the older learner. Circumstances such as retirement and widowhood, besides our youth-oriented society, tend to isolate the older person from the mainstream of life. Therefore, older learners who choose to participate in formal

educational settings are highly visible and may feel out of place when they first return to higher education.

Removing the sociological barrier involves developing an awareness of the extensive negativism about the older person and aging. Sterotypes are held by young and old alike. Social isolation of the older person also tends to perpetuate the misconceptions of aging because people lack a positive, first-hand interaction with the aged and the experience of aging. Therefore, it is essential that emphasis must be placed on creating opportunities that make the older learner participate in higher education visible and normal.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Educative behaviors of the older learner suggests that the most successful method of learning is group interaction employing a discussion format.

It is necessary to gain skills and orientation throughout life, because formal education, as once perceived, is inadequate.

Educational research should be broadened to include intuitive as well as rationalistic research, perhaps a holistic approach is needed. We also need educational guidance that will last a lifetime.

The syndrome of schooling for a better job has run its time. Educational institutions have not changed to take account the changing work pattern and life style of people living in a world of advanced technology.

In order to reach the senior audience with information on educational offerings in the community, a county-wide referral system should be established to

be coordinated with all the normal public relations vehicles.

As educational attainment is one of the best predictors of participation, we must offer courses of useful and practical knowledge to appeal to the poorly educated who show little or no interest in self-development or self-realization.

Perhaps some form of educational brokering might alleviate the lack of information and dissemination about educational offerings to the senior groups.

The first step toward lifelong learning for the older person may not necessarily require the development of a special program for the older learner. The first step should be to facilitate participation by determining what barriers keep older persons away from existing services and developing comprehensive strategy to remove them. This approach will help ensure that efforts to serve the older learner become an integral and integrated part of the college mission. The purpose of encouraging developing institutions to look beyond the mere creation of courses and services for the older person is to acknowledge the underlying rationale of education for the later years.

Among the reasons for low level participation

of the older learner in lifelong learning programs are cost, inconvenience, transportation problems, attitudes toward self, toward educational institutions, and anxiety over negative attitudes on the part of faculty and other students.

This fact is that the current generation of older persons has not been served well by our traditional, educational institution, many of which remain exclusively orientated toward youth.

Conclusions

Neglected and forgotten in our highly technical society the person is denied the benefits of income, work, and a place in the structure, despite their rights. One method of reinstating some of this loss of esteem through deliberate discarding could be to make each participant in a learning program aware that he is valuable, his opinions and ideas are important, his participation is meaningful and most of all . . . he is a person.

As we become a society of elders, the task of higher education will be to develop a holistic core that will contain learning activities for all ages.

Jerald W. Apps, professor of education,

University of Wisconsin at Madison states:

> The majority of research, as now practiced, is not consistent with the major assumptions in the field of adult education. There are woefully inadequate numbers of persons doing research and pitifully inadequate monetary support from both the private and public sector.

And a final word, new models of education as a life-long process must be developed.

Recommendations

In training the older learner, those tasks that relate to functions that decline with age should be eliminated or at least minimized.

It has been suggested by Botwinick (1967) that the older person has the capability to learn but is too rigid to do so.

As Cyril O. Houle (1972) suggests: "We should attempt to obtain greater conceptual coherence in all life-span learning."

There is a refreshing challenge in that the "high age" is becoming a different type in respect to background and aspiration even though participation of the older person in lifelong learning programs is not in proportion to their numbers.

We, as a nation, realize the importance of the educational experience and must provide the research

and leadership to meet the educative needs of older learners beyond the traditional school age because lifelong learning is in the public interest and academic achievement will cause a positive change in the individual learner's self-concept. The majority of research as now practiced is not consistent with the major assumptions in the field of lifelong learning.

It is in the national interest that educational resources be developed and augmented to the end that lifelong learning for all citizens, regardless of previous education be widely available to promote our nation's continued vitality (Shepphard, 1979).

The challenge of involving older persons in education must be met by the university. This mature learner is envisioned as playing a vital role in forcing the university to reexamine its goals.

Schools need to prepare for the time when one-sixth of all Americans will be sixty-five or older by finding ways for the generations to learn from one another.

According to Harvey A. Taub (1980) there is a need for research with meaningful prose in life-span

education.

We need to develop a theory of learning from the older learner's perspective.

This new educational consumer will demand lifelong learning in ever greater volume and in more accessible form, and unless existing institutions are willing and able to deliver the goods, they may well be bypassed by other agencies.

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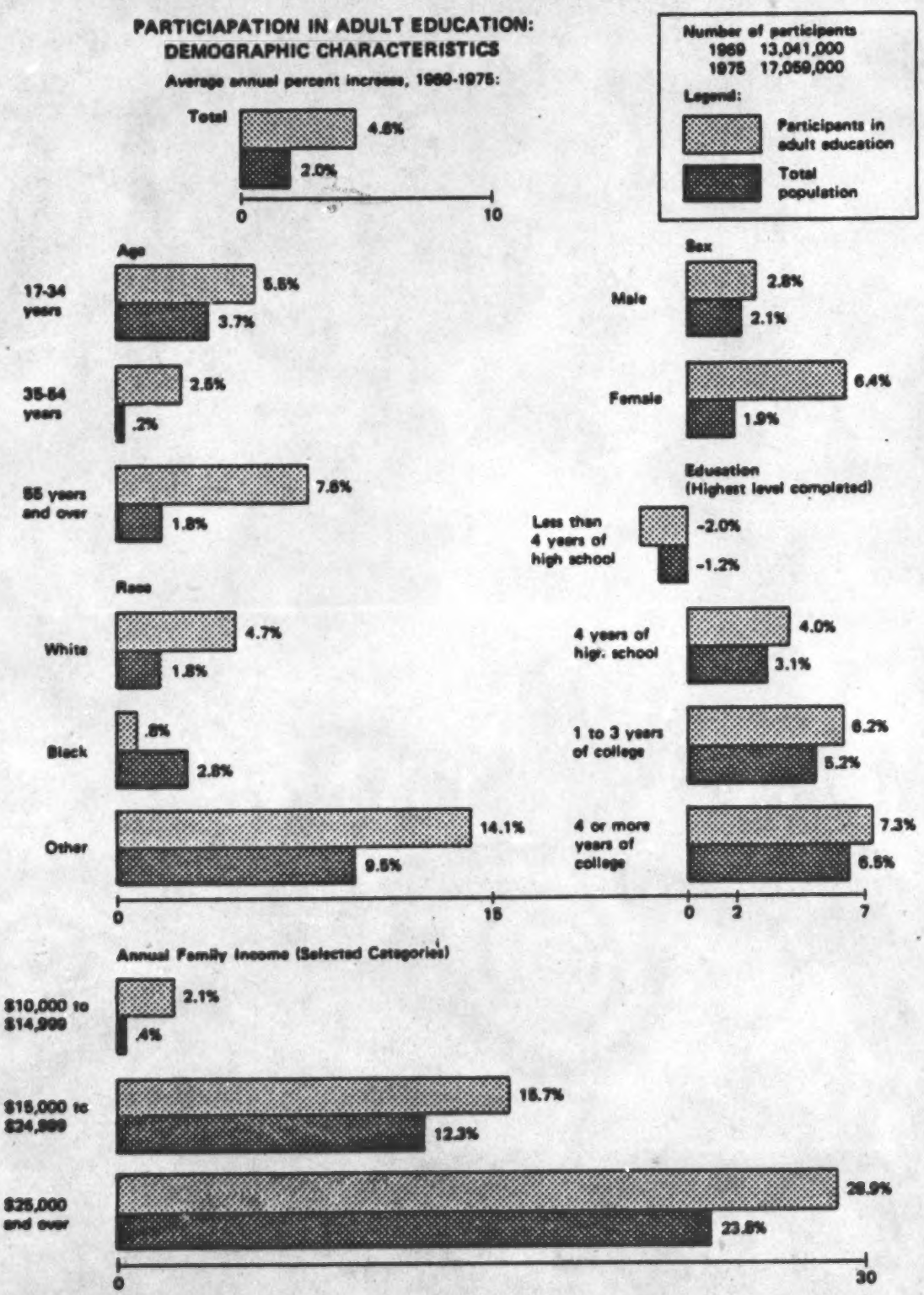
APPENDIX A

FINAL REPORT 1975

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
WASHINGTON, D.C.: U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING
OFFICE, 1978

II. PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION: SUMMARY AND TRENDS, 1969-1975

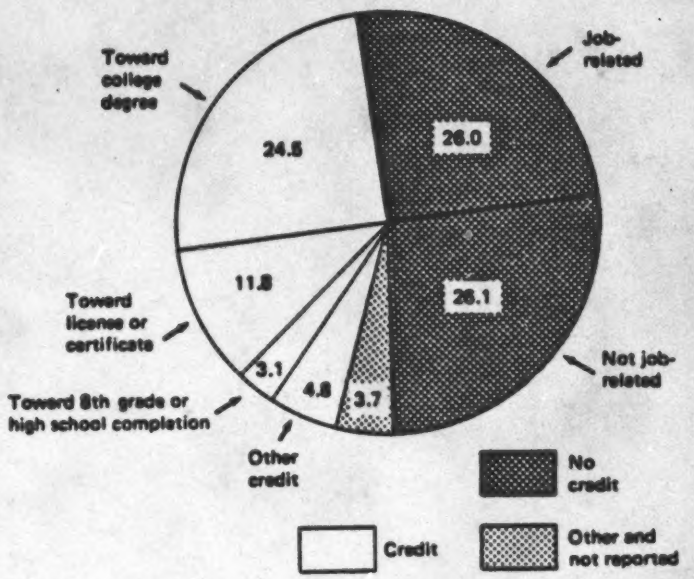


PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION: COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

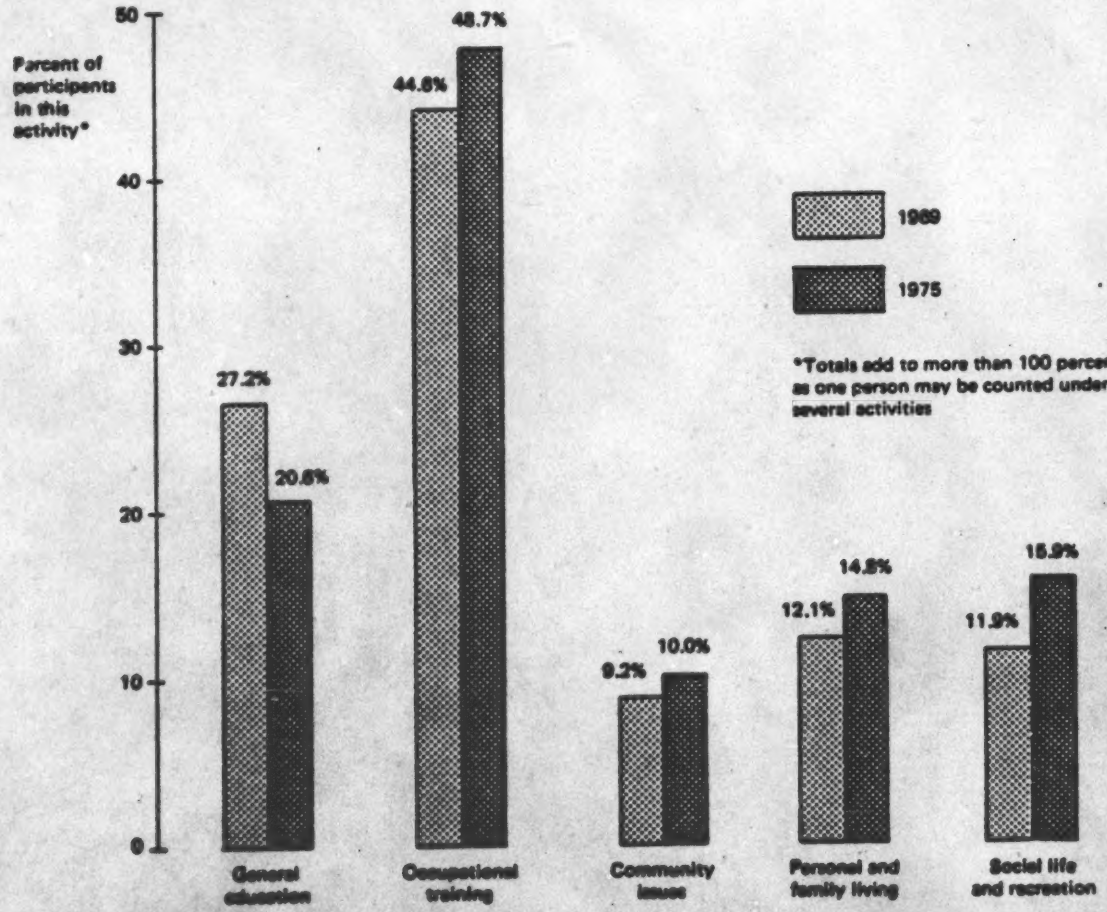
Number of Courses

1969	20,000,000
1975	27,047,000

Percent of courses, by credit earned or expected, 1975



Participant Description of Course



*Totals add to more than 100 percent as one person may be counted under several activities

le 21.–Participants in adult education who were not full-time students in high school or college, by number of courses per participant, and by selected participant characteristics: United States, year ending May 1975.

(Noninstitutionalized civilian population)

Participant characteristic	Total participants	Courses per participant				
		One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more
	Frequency distribution (in thousands)					
l participants (17 years and over):	17,059	11,592	2,948	1,223	985	311
p 17-24 years	3,448	2,357	560	250	200	81
p 25-34 years	6,156	3,920	1,175	484	447	129
p 35-44 years	3,348	2,255	584	276	184	49
p 45-54 years	2,481	1,769	411	149	114	37
p 55-64 years	1,129	886	147	61	32	13
p 65 years and over	498	404	71	14	7	2
est number of years of school completed:						
mentary school (0-8 years)	530	446	48	22	11	3
gh school, 1-3 years	1,226	958	143	68	55	13
gh school, 4 years	6,396	4,881	945	306	208	57
llege, 1-3 years	3,687	2,314	669	318	266	121
llege, 4 years	3,095	1,861	677	286	223	49
llege, 5 or more years	2,125	1,133	466	235	223	68
e:	15,739	10,699	2,734	1,125	887	295
hite	1,031	711	149	83	73	16
ack	289	182	66	15	26	0
her						
le	8,027	5,550	1,289	571	475	142
male	9,032	6,042	1,659	652	511	168
	Horizontal percent distribution					
l participants (17 years and over):	17,059	68.0	17.3	7.2	5.8	1.8
p 17-24 years	3,448	68.4	16.2	7.2	5.8	2.3
p 25-34 years	6,156	63.7	19.1	7.9	7.3	2.1
p 35-44 years	3,348	67.4	17.4	8.2	5.5	1.5
p 45-54 years	2,481	71.3	16.6	6.0	4.6	1.5
p 55-64 years	1,129	78.5	13.0	4.5	2.9	1.1
p 65 years and over	498	81.2	14.2	2.8	1.5	.3
est number of years of school completed:						
mentary school (0-8 years)	530	84.1	9.1	4.1	2.1	.8
gh school, 1-3 years	1,226	78.1	11.7	4.7	4.4	1.0
gh school, 4 years	6,396	76.3	14.8	4.8	3.2	.9
llege, 1-3 years	3,687	62.8	18.1	8.6	7.2	3.3
llege, 4 years	3,095	60.1	21.9	9.2	7.2	1.6
llege, 5 or more years	2,125	53.3	21.9	11.1	10.5	3.2
e:	15,739	68.0	17.4	7.2	5.6	1.9
hite	1,031	68.9	14.4	8.0	7.1	1.5
ack	289	63.1	22.8	5.2	8.9	.0
her						
le	8,027	69.1	16.1	7.1	5.9	1.8
male	9,032	66.9	18.4	7.2	5.7	1.9
	Vertical percent distribution					
l participants (17 years and over):	17,059	11,592	2,948	1,223	985	311
s 17-24 years	20.2	20.3	19.0	20.4	20.3	26.0
s 25-34 years	36.1	33.8	39.9	39.6	45.3	41.7
s 35-44 years	19.6	19.5	19.8	22.5	18.7	15.7
s 45-54 years	14.5	15.3	14.0	12.1	11.6	12.0
s 55-64 years	6.6	7.6	5.0	4.2	3.3	4.1
s 65 years and over	2.9	3.5	2.4	1.2	.7	.5
est number of years of school completed:						
mentary school (0-8 years)	3.1	3.8	1.8	1.8	1.1	1.1
h school, 1-3 years	7.2	8.3	4.9	4.8	5.5	4.0
h school, 4 years	37.5	42.1	32.1	24.9	21.1	18.3
lege, 1-3 years	21.6	20.0	22.7	26.0	27.0	39.0
lege, 4 years	18.1	16.1	23.0	23.4	22.6	18.7
lege, 5 or more years	12.5	9.8	15.8	19.2	22.7	21.8
:	92.3	92.3	92.7	92.0	90.0	94.9
te	6.0	6.1	5.0	6.8	7.4	5.1
ck	1.7	1.6	2.2	1.2	2.6	.0
er						
le	47.1	47.9	43.7	46.7	48.2	45.8
male	52.9	52.1	56.3	53.3	51.8	54.2

L–Details may not add to totals because of rounding.